

Welcome to our Annual Review of Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering for 2018 - 2019

Once again I have to offer a huge debt of thanks to everyone involved with CASCK this year. Together we have reached out and helped thousands of individual clients both in Kettering and Corby who without our assistance would probably have suffered detriment for one reason or another.

I would like to also recognise the help, assistance and financial support we receive each year from our respective Borough Councils. Without their help we would struggle to survive - thank you.

This organisation is blessed with our employees who are led so well by Debbie and her team in both offices, however we also need to recognise the countless hours of work produced tirelessly and warmly by our team of excellent volunteers who help to steer the course required by our clients.

I would also like to take this opportunity to personally thank the Board of Trustees without whom the association could not survive.

I look forward to the following years confident that CASCK is continuing in its pathway to helping those who need us as always.



(Paul Clarke attending our Volunteers' Week Celebration)

- Paul Clarke, Chair of the Trustee Board

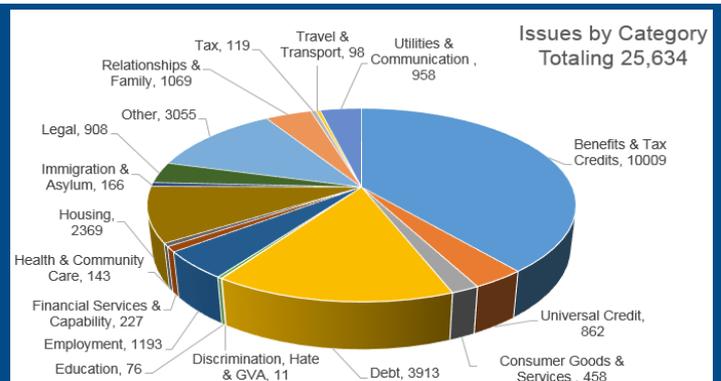
OUR AIMS

Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering provides **free, independent, impartial, confidential** advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. As an organisation we **value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.**

OUR IMPACT

Between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, Citizens Advice Corby and Kettering helped clients deal with **25,634 issues**

This means that on average during our opening hours, **local citizens turned to us for help with an issue every 3 minutes.***



Thank You

May we take this opportunity to say thank you to our funders and partners for their much valued support. In a survey completed in April 2019, of the applicable funders and partners who responded, 100% were satisfied or very satisfied with Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering as a delivery partner.

Partner Quote

“They are extremely approachable, and are forward thinking and creative in their responses to the local need. They are brilliant.”

Our Funders: • Corby Borough Council • Kettering Borough Council • Northamptonshire Community Foundation • Henry Smith Charity • Big Lottery • Awards for All • European Social Fund • Citizens Advice • Big Local • CLS/Warm Homes Fund • Desborough Town Council



Our Partners: • Corby Borough Council • CBC Housing Options • Kettering Borough Council • KBC Housing Options • Homestart Corby • Community Law Service Northampton & County (CLS) • Corby Voluntary & Community Services • Kettering Voluntary Network • JobCentre+ Corby • JobCentre+ Kettering • CENCAB • Daventry Citizens Advice • Citizens Advice • Kingswood & Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centres • Kettering Community Unit • Kettering Futures Partnership

*25,634 issues recorded on Casebook between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019. Number of operating days during this period totals 249 days with opening hours 9am-2pm. Total operating hours is equal to 1245 hours. 25,634 issues / 1245 hours = 20.6 issues per hour = more than 1 issue every 3 minutes.

OUR WORK

We are a registered charity providing **free, independent, impartial, confidential** advice to everybody, regardless of race, religion, gender, disability or sexuality. We help our clients with issues that are important to them, from debt worries and benefit entitlements, to housing issues and energy advice.

Whoever you are, whatever the problem: We're here to help.

DEBT

We advise on managing money, negotiating with creditors and choosing debt management options.

In 2018 – 2019 the amount of debt we helped our clients to manage totals:

£3,474,504.50

BENEFITS

We advise people on how to claim benefits to which they may be entitled.

We also assist clients with appeals and mandatory reconsiderations.

HOUSING

We advise clients on issues including:

- Eviction • Private Tenancies
- Social Housing Tenancies
 - Possession Orders
- Property Repairs • Homelessness

In 2018-2019 Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering generated an estimated income for our clients totaling: £ 3,228,230.02

EMPLOYMENT

We advise employees and employers on issues including:

- Unfair Dismissal
- Employment Rights
- Discrimination • Bullying

OTHER

We provide information on how to access specialist help and give advice to clients on a wide range of issues including:

- Disputed tax • Energy • Immigration • Consumer
- Legal • Education

We also issue vouchers for local Foodbanks.

RELATIONSHIPS

We give information on how to access legal help and give advice on practical solutions in response to issues such as:

- Neighbour disputes • Domestic violence
- School problems • Family breakups

Comments from our April 2019 Client Satisfaction Survey

"Made a stressful situation a lot easier!"

Our client satisfaction survey showed that of those who answered, 100% of clients would recommend and use our service again.

"So helpful!"



Cllr. Tom Beattie

Statement from Corby Borough Councillor

"Corby Borough Council would like to thank and congratulate the Citizens Advice Services for another successful year in providing extremely valuable assistance and

advice to Corby's community. The CAS has helped residents through a number of difficult situations ranging from debt relief, tribunal issues and everyday concerns. We are extremely pleased to work closely with CAS and hope to continue this relationship in order to provide Corby residents with extensive, confidential and impartial advice that they need."

- Councillor Tom Beattie,
Leader of Corby Borough Council



Cllr. Russell Roberts

Statement from Kettering Borough Councillor

"I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the CAB on another good year highlighted by the green rating received from the recent Citizens

Advice Leadership Self-assessment Audit. As we transcend into the new governance arrangements for North Northamptonshire, the work that CAB does along with their other third sector partners is increasingly important. Thank you to everybody; keep up the good work."

- Councillor Russell Roberts
Leader of Kettering Borough Council

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS' WEEK



To show our gratitude to our hard working volunteers, we held our annual Volunteers' Week celebration on 5th June 2019.



We celebrated our volunteers at The Blitz Cafe with afternoon tea, followed by visiting the Alfred East Art Gallery and the Manor House Museum.



"The Blitz is a café decorated in a World War 2 style, with many items of memorabilia. Incidentally, one of our volunteers added to their collection by donating an RAF cap he had! The café has a very welcoming atmosphere and it was interesting to look at all the items.

All in all it was a very enjoyable afternoon which enabled the volunteers to chat sociably with each other and with paid staff. As we don't often get the chance to do this due to different working days and locations of the offices in the area, the occasion was a great chance to catch up and meet new volunteers and was greatly appreciated by all."

- Babs Archer, Volunteer Adviser

How much do our volunteers mean to us?

Over the past year, our team of valued and skilled volunteers have donated

£142,510

worth of time and effort to help us to help the local communities we serve.

Our volunteers represent the diverse communities we live in and reflect a wide range of different backgrounds, ages and experiences.



VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL

A few years ago I found myself stumbling between unfortunate events, becoming redundant, a single-mum and as a result, homeless.

My son and I managed to find a home with the help of Kettering Borough Council's housing team. A year later I began to look at the possibility of returning to work when my then two-year-old was admitted to hospital and diagnosed with a long-term health condition, relapsing frequently. Returning to work seemed impossible.

Over the next two years, my mental health and confidence declined. By this time I was on income support and had been assigned a Work Coach at Kettering JobCentre+ called Lisa. She was wonderful, and made every effort to help me feel as though I could possibly overcome my complete lack of confidence and faith in my ability to be of any use to an employer.

Knowing my interest in admin work, she mentioned that Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering might accept an application for a voluntary admin assistant. She put this forward to me as a way to build up my confidence with little pressure, assuring me that the team at Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering were in fact among the kindest people imaginable.

After agreeing to try this, she rang Karen at Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering. I spoke to Karen about my abilities and made clear my lack of confidence and she sent me an application form via email, telling me to ring her if I had any worries.

I applied and went to an interview with Karen, meeting Vin and some of the staff and volunteers on the day. They made me feel welcome and went out of their way to make me feel valued. They offered me a voluntary position for a few hours per week while my son was at nursery.

Slowly my confidence grew, I regained control of my life and the support I received was enough to help me take on new challenges and reach achievements in my personal life.

A year after I started as a volunteer, I am now an employee of Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering. Their support of me as a volunteer has changed not just my life, but my son's future. I am immensely grateful.

- Amy, Admin

We would like to give sincere thanks to everyone, both volunteers and paid staff who work at our Corby and Kettering Offices. They provide a first class service to the residents of Corby and Kettering Boroughs and the surrounding villages:

Adrian, Alex, Amy, Anca, Anne, Babs, Biro, Bruce, Caroline, Charlotte, Christopher, Clare D, Clare W, David, Debbie, Demi, Dorota, Elaine, Fiona, Gary, James, Jane, Jeff, Joanne, John, Joy, Katherine, Karen, Katie, Keeley, Lesley B, Lesley T, Liam, Liz, Lorraine, Lynn, Margaret, Michelle, Nata, Pattie, Paul C, Paul H, Paul T, Pete, Rachael, Rattinan, Richard, Ruth, Sally, Sukhy, Tony, Tracey, Trish, Vinny.

RESEARCH & CAMPAIGNS

National and local research and campaigns teams work to identify issues affecting our clients, and use the gathered evidence of this to influence policy makers and services to bring about changes that will positively impact the lives of people both locally and nationally. The changes that result from work like this can benefit everyone, even members of the public that have never used a local Citizens Advice service before. This work is fundamental in the pursuit of the service's aim to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

National Research and Campaigns

Evidence used nationally by Citizens Advice for research and campaigns work between April 2018 and March 2019

Benefits

- Back payment of underpaid ESA premiums
- Gatekeeping claims and Pension Credit
- The use and impact of benefit sanctions

Energy

- Poor experiences relating to smart meters
- Energy clients struggling to manage online / feeling excluded online

Residency

- Issues relating to Brexit
- Errors in habitual residency / right to reside under UC

Debt

- Doorstep loans / home credit
- Bailiff action and complaints

Mental Health

- Loneliness and isolation
- Use of technology for mental health

Local Research & Campaigns

Between April 2018 and March 2019, Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering carried out research relating to the advice needs of people with mental health issues in our local communities.

We also looked at the impact of mental health leaving clients unable to use their telephone for voice or internet access in regards to providing medical evidence because they felt no confidence in answering the telephone, filling in online forms or remembering conversations.

Moving Forward

Moving forward into 2019-2020, after the mental health issues identified in 2018-2019, Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering will work closely with our partners to more intensely look into improving access to services for clients with mental health issues as part of our Research and Campaigns work. We will also be looking into the length of time that clients are waiting for mandatory reconsideration decisions to be made.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY



Corby & Kettering

Opening Times & Contact Details

KETTERING OFFICE

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Opening Hours | Monday - Friday 9:00am - 2:00pm |
| Address | Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX |
| Telephone | 01536 482281 |
| Email | volunteerdevelopment@casck.co.uk |

CORBY OFFICE

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Opening Hours | Monday-Wednesday 9:00am - 2:00pm (Specialist appointments available Thursdays and Fridays) |
| Address | The Corby Cube, Parklands Gateway, George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG |
| Telephone | 01536 265501 |
| Email | volunteerdevelopment@casck.co.uk |

NATIONAL ADVICE LINE

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Telephone | 03444 111 444 |
| Available | Monday – Friday 10:00am – 3:00pm |

LOCAL WEBSITE

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/corby-kettering

STATEMENT FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER



Another busy year for CASCK in which our primary objective remains to support and enable people to move forward in a positive way. Our holistic approach ensures that all issues are identified and by working together with our clients, we find the best possible solutions to the problems they are facing. Partnership working is also key to resolving the often complicated and difficult situations our clients present to us.

Our positive impacts and outcomes for our clients can only be achieved with a culture of 'can do' that we are proud to have through the experienced, passionate and dedicated team of Volunteers and Paid Staff. So a personal thank you from me for all of their hard work which enables us to change people's lives for the better every single day. Last but not least, a huge thank you to our Funders for their support and to our Partners who work with us to deliver the joined up interventions that are so important in making a real difference to the lives of our clients.

- Debbie Egan, Chief Officer

OUTREACHES

We also work in several outreach locations, making our services accessible to a wider number of clients.

Current Outreach Locations

- Rothwell Library
- Desborough Library
- Burton Latimer Library
- Kingswood & Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centres